



U.S. Immigration  
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Enforcement

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# News Release

## **Tacoma pastor convicted of visa fraud, conspiracy, and obstruction of justice** *Leader of Hope Korean Church sought visas for imposter religious workers*

SEATTLE – The pastor of the Hope Korean Church in Tacoma faces up to ten years in prison after being found guilty of filing fraudulent visa applications on behalf of foreign nationals he claimed were coming to serve as religious workers at his church and then pressuring those aliens to lie about the scheme.

Dong Wan Park, 52, was convicted Friday of obstruction of justice, conspiring to defraud the government, and three counts of visa fraud. U.S. District Judge Ronald B. Leighton found Park guilty after hearing testimony that the pastor took tens of thousands of dollars from Korean nationals to file fraudulent visa applications on their behalf, claiming they were coming to the United States to serve as religious workers.

According to records filed in the case, Park, who was indicted in November 2005, advertised in a Korean language newspaper that immigration visas were available through his church. In exchange for as much as \$30,000, Park provided the visa paperwork, including phony transcripts from a Korean seminary and a certificate of ordination from a Korean bishop. Park signed the petitions representing that the applicants were to be associate pastors at the Hope Korean Church and would be paid \$24,000 a year. In fact, none of the applicants was ever employed at the church nor had they had any religious training.

After the scheme started to unravel, Park attempted to get the applicants to change their story and mislead investigators. In one instance, Park was recorded telling an applicant to insist to investigators that the documents filed with the visa applications were legitimate and to hide any evidence of payments to Park. During the trial, Park claimed that the monies he received from the visa applicants were loans or donations to the church. In fact, Park used the money for his own purposes, often withdrawing it at tribal casinos in Pierce County.

The charges against Park arose from an earlier investigation into a fraud scheme allegedly headed by a man named Jung Kim, who is accused of luring Korean investors to the United States under the guise of receiving highly profitable janitorial franchises along with lawful immigration status. Jung Kim will be sentenced June 24, 2006, after pleading guilty to wire fraud and visa fraud.

Park's sentencing is set for October 13 at 9:30 a.m. before Judge Leighton.

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